

Geostory of the National Mall

Introductory video

Welcome to the National Mall, a National Park in Washington, D.C. where large stone monuments and memorials honor important historical people and events. The National Mall is a good place to visit if you want to learn about American history and be a historian. And because of all the different stones used in the construction of the memorials, it is also a good place to visit if you want to learn about rocks and be a geologist.

What happens if we look at Washington, D.C.'s geology and history together? We can call it GEOSTORY (because that sure sounds a lot better than Histology) and find out how the rocks help to support and tell the story of our country.

In downtown Washington, D.C. we have not only the geology under our feet to explore, but also the geology of the memorials made from rocks from around the country brought to the capital city. These stone memorials help to tell the stories of America's past. But have you ever wondered about the stories of the stones themselves? Rock types for each memorial were chosen for their unique color, texture, and strength - as well as the moods and stories they create.

The stone not only provides the building blocks of each structure, but strengthens the themes and ideas of the monuments and memorials as well. If you look only at the art and architecture of each site, you miss the great variety of rock "outcrops" in the middle of Washington, D.C. But if you look only at the rock, you miss the great stories and meanings of the memorials. Why not look at both at the same time? Go ahead, be both a historian *and* a geologist as we discover the GEOSTORY of the National Mall.